



United States Mission to the OSCE

Joint Permanent Council and Forum for Security and Cooperation Plenary Statement

July 11, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

The United States along with six other countries observed “Small Arms Destruction Day” on July 9, 2007. Albania, Ukraine, and our partner State Afghanistan, along with the United States, celebrated “Small Arms Destruction Day” by destroying a symbolic “millionth weapon.” These events demonstrated the United States’ ongoing commitment to assisting countries recovering from conflict by taking practical steps to implement the “UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.”

The U.S. Department of State’s “Millionth Weapon Destruction” events featured the simultaneous crushing or cutting at 12:00 noon GMT on July 9th of a small arm or light weapon in the OSCE countries previously mentioned, except in Ukraine where a similar event is taking place today, July 11.

The United States is a global leader in efforts mitigating the illicit trafficking and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons, such as assault rifles, grenade launchers, and man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS).

Securing and destroying weapons stockpiles prevents theft, loss, or pilferage and therefore keeps the weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists or insurgents. Protecting and eliminating surplus weapons also promotes public safety and the rule of law by preventing crime and protecting other U.S. aid and assistance programs. By destroying these arms we avert their use in future conflicts, and also eliminate countries’ stockpile security expenses.

In 2006-07 alone, the United States has contributed nearly 1.4 million Euros in support to OSCE projects. Since 2001 we have provided more than \$58 million to more than 25 countries to destroy more than one million small arms and light weapons, more than 90 million pieces of ammunition, and more than 21,000 MANPADS.

As the United States continues its assistance programs to destroy small arms and light weapons, we encourage our partners in the OSCE to likewise remain committed to the 2001 UN Program of Action on SA/LW and the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.